



University of Groningen

Ik heb geen verstand van poëzie, G.A. van Oorscot als uitgever van poëzie

Vries, Gert Jan

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

Document Version

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:

1996

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Vries, G. J. (1996). Ik heb geen verstand van poëzie, G.A. van Oorscot als uitgever van poëzie. Uitgeverij G.A. van Oorscot.

Copyright

Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

Take-down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Downloaded from the University of Groningen/UMCG research database (Pure): <http://www.rug.nl/research/portal>. For technical reasons the number of authors shown on this cover page is limited to 10 maximum.

SUMMARY*

The investigation of the behaviour and activities of publishers is part of the shift towards the analysis of social, institutional and infrastructural aspects of literature that has recently taken place in studies of Dutch literature. Scholarly investigation of publishers and publishing houses is still relatively new. Two important contributions were made by Van den Brink (1984) and De Glas (1989). Van den Brink focussed on managerial and legal aspects related to the entire sector of the 'information media' (i.e. anything from publishing volumes of poetry to floppy disks), while De Glas concentrated on the development of the publication list of two prewar Dutch publishing houses. It is quite remarkable that, although the publishing companies he describes were ideological foundations serving the working classes, De Glas dismisses the opinions of publishers on literature and society as useless and irrelevant; instead, he suggests that a large-scale analysis of the publishing list yields a far more solid framework for writing an adequate history of a publishing house, which, in conjunction with matters pertaining to business economics, can provide insight into the long-term strategies of its policy-makers (see 'Inleiding').

The present study investigates a far smaller area than an entire sector of information media or complete publishing houses. It deals with the poetry catalogue of G.A. van Oorschot's publishing house, which contains less than a hundred titles. Nevertheless, other aspects of the publishing house are also discussed, as is the publisher himself. In contrast to the approach of De Glas, the mental and moral profile of the publisher himself has been studied in detail. Mr. Van Oorschot always appealed to certain literary traditions, good taste and social interests, which offers a very

* Met dank aan Theo Heijnsbergen voor de vertaling

fruitful starting point for the description of his company (see chapter I).

Managerial, logistic and financial aspects are also analysed. In spite of the simple organisation, the structure of the company of G.A. van Oorschot had a great influence on its policy towards literature. Financial considerations were of far greater consequence than the publisher would ever have admitted. Studying the structure of the organisation furthermore shows how a company with hardly any staff could not only exist but even assume a status of authority with regard to matters of literary history (see chapter II).

The moral profile of the publisher was mainly reflected in the literary magazines he published through the years and which he considered as 'weapons for a just cause'. These magazines (*De baanbreker*, *Libertinage* and *Tirade* respectively) were highly important to Van Oorschot's list of publications. The editors of these magazines, if not unpaid employees, were at least important and influential advisers to the company. The impractical preference of Van Oorschot for a certain (and certainly unpopular) political opinion upset and on several occasions even broke the otherwise fruitful relationship between the magazines and the output of the publishing house (see chapter III).

Roughly speaking, the company's output of poetry consists of three categories of volumes of poetry, varying in form, size, price, 'completeness' and canonicity. Best known are the precious 'Collected Works' (*Verzamelde Werken*) of highly reputable poets; apart from many important poets from the interbellum, Van Oorschot in this series also brought together major poets from the first two decades of the century and, in a later period, some poets of his 'own breed' as well. Secondly, contemporary poetry of generally young poets was published mainly in separate small volumes; during the first few years of the company's existence, Van Oorschot seemed to use this format mainly for the exposure of uneven work of friends and sympathizers. In the mid-sixties his magazine *Tirade* drew together several poets who (despite their unmistakable differences) were soon regarded as a separate literary movement, and the work of these so-called *Tirade*-poets sold ex-

tremely well. Finally, some poetry, in a different category, were being published in series which Van Oorschot had started in 1952 (see chapter IV).

In 1967, undiplomatic changes in the literary world disrupted the relations between Van Oorschot and the literary world, and Van Oorschot's knowledge of current literary trends was out of date. New editors finally put an end to this 'solo' period and the careers of the poets concerned were not as successful. Van Oorschot was equally outdated powers to blame for this; being too old-fashioned and, consequently, became insecure and, consequently, which complicated matters.

ing point for the description of his company
logistic and financial aspects are also analysed of the simple organisation, the structure of the G.A. van Oorschot had a great influence on its literary production. Financial considerations were of less consequence than the publisher would ever have imagined. Judging the structure of the organisation furrows how a company with hardly any staff could exist but even assume a status of authority in matters of literary history (see chapter II).

The profile of the publisher was mainly reflected in the magazines he published through the years. He considered as 'weapons for a just cause'. The magazines (*De baanbreker*, *Libertinage* and *Tirade*) were highly important to Van Oorschot's list of publications. The editors of these magazines, if not unpaid, were at least important and influential advisers for the company. The impractical preference of Van Oorschot for certain (and certainly unpopular) political opinions and on several occasions even broke the other-worldly relationship between the magazines and the publishing house (see chapter III).

In speaking, the company's output of poetry consisted of several categories of volumes of poetry, varying in price, 'completeness' and canonicity. Best known were the precious 'Collected Works' (*Verzamelde werken*) of highly reputable poets; apart from many imprints from the interbellum, Van Oorschot in this period brought together major poets from the first half of the century and, in a later period, some of his 'own breed' as well. Secondly, contemporary poetry of generally young poets was published mainly in small volumes; during the first few years of the company's existence, Van Oorschot seemed to use this form for the exposure of uneven work of friends and acquaintances. In the mid-sixties his magazine *Tirade* drew together several poets who (despite their unmistakable differences) were soon regarded as a separate literary movement. The work of these so-called *Tirade*-poets sold ex-

tremely well. Finally, semi-canonized poets, the third category, were being published in the *Vignettenreeks*, a series which Van Oorschot continued to run for two decades, starting in 1952 (see chapter IV).

In 1967, undiplomatic manoeuvres of the publisher disrupted the relations between magazine and publishing catalogue, and Van Oorschot was thrown back on his own knowledge of current literary affairs until 1976, when new editors finally put themselves forward. Acquisitions from this 'solo' period are not impressive; the literary careers of the poets concerned were generally brief and unsuccessful. Van Oorschot's old-fashioned taste and his equally outdated powers of literary judgment are partly to blame for this; being aware of these shortcomings he became insecure and, consequently, needlessly capricious, which complicated matters even further (see chapter V).